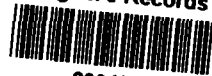


*Ed Capetani*

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



230495

# Pollutants move toward Mill Creek

## EPA fears effects on drinking water

BY ALLEN HOWARD

The Cincinnati Enquirer

UNION TOWNSHIP — While polluters argue over who should pay the estimated \$9.1 million cleanup cost of the closed Skinner Landfill, contaminated ground water is slowly moving toward the Mill Creek.

Eventually, it could filter into drinking water, Environmental Protection Agency officials say.

"We don't know how long it will take the contaminated ground water to reach the Mill Creek," said EPA's Scott Hansen, who is in charge of the project. "We can't start any kind of cleanup until they decide who will pay and how much."

While none of the aquifers in that area are used for drinking water, Mr. Hansen said his fear is that once the contaminated ground water reaches the Mill Creek it could slowly flow into the Ohio River.

"Lots of drinking water comes from the Ohio River,"

he said. "It is necessary to get barriers installed along the south side of the landfill to stop the water from moving toward the creek."

Once barriers are built, Mr. Hansen said a system will be installed to pump the contaminated water into trenches.

"The water will be hauled out, taken to a sewage plant, treated and dumped," he said.

The cleanup plan, designed by EPA and agreed to by the major polluters and residents in the area, also includes covering the entire dumping area with waterproof plastic and

topping it with dirt and grass.

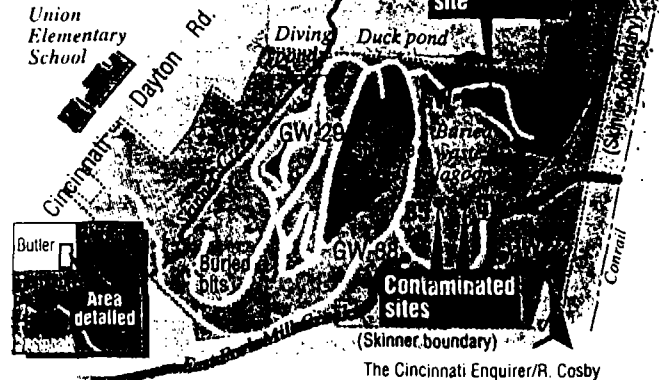
The waterproof covering would prevent air emissions and prevent rain water from washing contaminants toward the creek.

The landfill sits on 78 acres off Cincinnati-Dayton Road across the street from Union Elementary School. It is bordered by woods to the north, Conrail railroad tracks to the east, Skinner Creek to the west and the East Fork of the Mill Creek to the south.

From 1934 to 1990, it was

## Contaminants

Three monitoring wells, placed near a former dump site and a waste lagoon at the closed Skinner Landfill site, registered contaminated ground water. The Environmental Protection Agency said the contaminated water is moving toward the Mill Creek in Union Township.



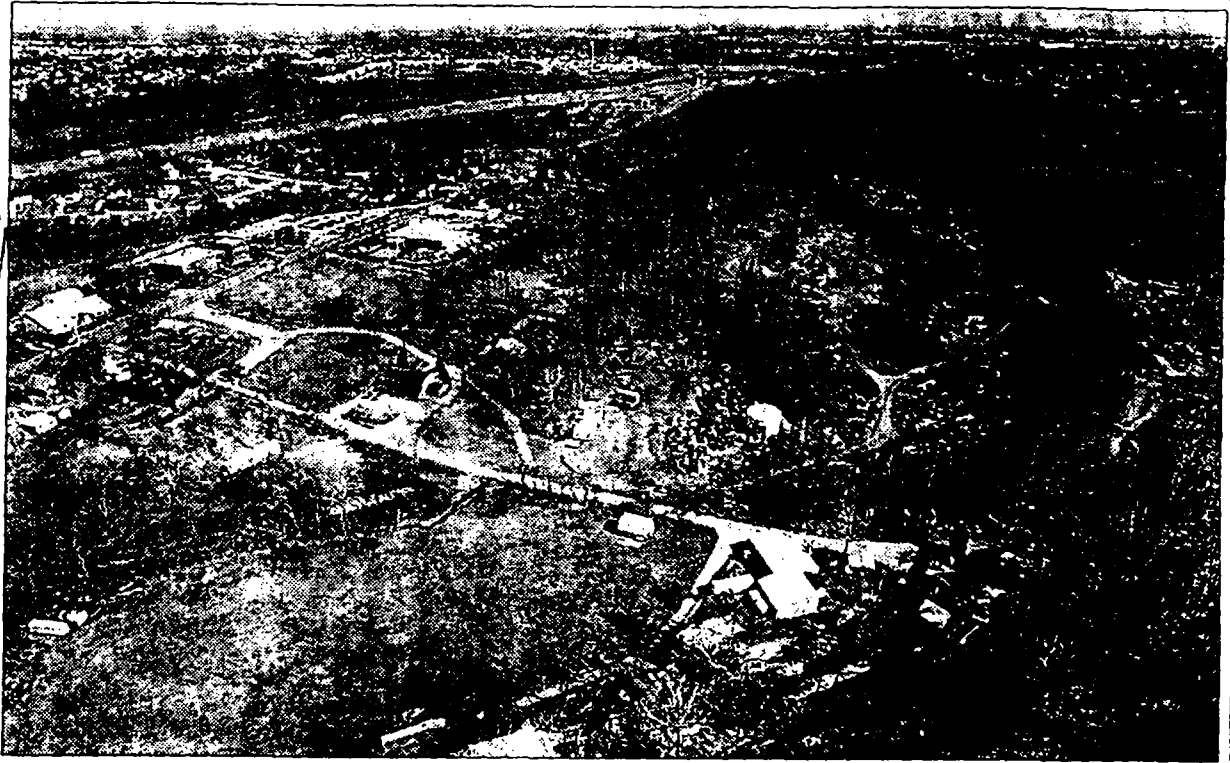
The Cincinnati Enquirer/R. Cosby

Scott

FYI

*Larry Bone*

(Please see POLLUTANTS, Page B9)



The Cincinnati Enquirer/Glenn Hartong

An aerial view of the Skinner Landfill, right, on 78 acres off Cincinnati-Dayton Road, upper left.

## Pollutants: Water heads to Mill Creek

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1

a main dumping ground for scores of local companies and municipalities that dumped a variety of toxic chemicals as well as construction debris. It has been fenced in since 1996.

A former dumping area on the east side of the landfill contains 120,000 cubic yards of waste buried 15 feet underground.

A monitoring well, installed near the area, shows that ground water in the area is contaminated with heavy concentrations of phenol, acetone, dichloroethane, benzene, chlorobenzene, hexanone, methylene chloride, toluene and xylenes, all identified by EPA as dangerous chemicals.

Another monitoring well, placed near a buried waste lagoon where waste haulers dumped drums of solid or semi-solid waste, showed the same concentration of chemical contaminants in the ground water.

"Both of these wells are located about 400 to 500 yards from the East Fork of the Mill Creek and the contaminated ground water is moving in the direction of the creek," Mr. Hansen said.

Cleanup of the landfill was scheduled to start last August but has been delayed while the polluters argue over who pays.

Six major polluters identified by

EPA agreed to pay for the cleanup two years ago. But the six — Dow Chemical Co., Ford Motor Co., General Electric Aircraft Engines, Morton International Inc., PPG Industrial Inc. and Velsicol Chemical Corp. — sought out 85 others and sued them to help pay the tab.

That set off a string of court proceedings, and the issue now rests with the EPA's dispute resolution procedure, which aims to settle the case before it comes to trial.

Under this procedure, an allocator recommends the amount each should pay, but his decision is not binding. His final report is due April 17.

Mr. Hansen said the EPA spent \$3.1 million investigating the site, designing the cleanup plan and fencing the site.

The Butler County landfill became part of EPA's Superfund program in 1983.

The cleanup plan is pleasing to Beth Hower, president of Citizens Lobby for Environmental Action Now, but she wonders when it will get started and how.

"I agree that entombing the stuff is probably the best method," Mrs. Hower said. "But I am worried about dust from the site escaping into the air and whether workers will track contaminated soil off the site."

She called the closed landfill the worst example of chemical contamination in the country. There are 144 chemicals mixed together and buried under construction debris, she said.

"I don't think there is any one method that can be used to clean up the site. All that stuff is sitting there and has formed a big pile of contaminated gunk," she said.

Mrs. Hower is concerned about an evacuation plan in case contaminated air is discovered in the area during the capping of the landfill.

Bob Winterberger, principal of Union Elementary School, said he feels safe now because the area is being monitored.

"We have been a part of the discussions on cleaning up the site," Mr. Winterberger said. "Being involved in the discussions creates a comfort level, but I am worried about how they will handle the capping procedure."

The EPA's Mr. Hansen said whatever company does the work must maintain control of dust and dirt.

"They will have to have constant monitoring, because if I learn of any contaminated air escaping or contaminated dirt outside the site, I will stop the work immediately," he said.